

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY MEXICO
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
AMCONSUL BELIZE
USMISSION USUN NY
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L GUATEMALA 5123

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, BH, GT
SUBJ: BELIZE: PRESIDENT LUCAS COMMENTS

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED.
SUMMARY. DURING IMPROMPTU SESSION WITH REPORTERS AUGUST 28,
PRESIDENT LUCAS ACKNOWLEDGED TOTAL RECOVERY OF BELIZE TO BE
IMPOSSIBLE; LOOKED WITH APPARENT FAVOR ON TRANSACTION TRANS-
FERING SOUTHERN BELIZE TO GUATEMALA; STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF
GUATEMALAN ACCESS TO OPEN SEA; BLAMED PRICE FOR FAILURE TO
REACH SETTLEMENT; CONFIRMED PLANS FOR TALKS SOON WITH UK;
AND INTIMATED GOG WOULD BE DOING MORE LOBBYING THAN IN PAST
WITH "THIRD WORLD." END SUMMARY

1. DURING VISIT TO PETEN AUGUST 28, PRESIDENT LUCAS REFERRED
AT LENGTH TO GUATEMALAN POSITION ON BELIZE (AS QUOTED BY EL
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GRAFICO);

(A) ON POSSIBILITY OF REVERSING "THIRD WORLD TREND AGAINST
GOG POSITION: "BUT, IF WE GET CLOSER TO THEM AND EXPLAIN
CLEARLY TO THEM HOW THE BRITISH PROGRESSIVELY TOOK OVER BELIZE
AND WHAT OUR HISTORICAL AND TERRITORIAL RIGHTS ARE, WE COULD
ACHIEVE A SHIFT IN POSITIONS...AT LEAST THE EFFORT SHOULD BE

MADE."

(B) REGARDING HIS VIEW OF A PARTIAL TERRITORIAL TRANSFER:
"THE CONSTITUTION IS CLEAR WITH RESPECT TO (THE PRINCIPLE OF)
TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY AND ANY NEGOTIATION MUST BE UNDERTAKEN
WITH THAT IN MIND. NONETHELESS, WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE THAT IT
WILL BE IMPOSSIBLE TO OBTAIN ALL OF BELIZE...SINCE WE HAVE
BEFORE US THE OPINION OF MORE THAN A HUNDRED COUNTRIES WHICH
SUPPORT ITS INDEPENDENCE." HE ADDED, "...SOUTHERN BELIZE IS
IMPORTANT TO US SINCE WE ARE HEMMED IN NOW. WE HAVE NO OUTLET
TO THE OCEAN...BECAUSE BELIZE BLOCKS OUR ACCESS TO THE BAY OF
AMATIQUE." NOTING THE SUPPOSED ETHNIC SIMILARITIES BETWEEN
SOUTHERN BELIZE AND NEIGHBORING PARTS OF GUATEMALA, LUCAS SAID,
"RECOVERY OF ALL OF THE SOUTHERN PORTION WOULD SATISFY MANY
OF GUATEMALA'S NEEDS. MAYBE THAT COULD BE A GOOD SETTLEMENT."
HE SAID PRICE, WHO HAS BEEN OPPOSED TO ANY KIND OF SOLUTION,
HAD BEEN THE "STUMBLING BLOCK" UP TO NOW.

(C) LUCAS CONFIRMED THAT THE GOG AND UK ARE CURRENTLY WORKING
ON A DATE AND PLACE FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS UNDER
HIS ADMINISTRATION.

END UNCLASSIFIED/BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL

2. COMMENT. THIS REPRESENTS THE PRESIDENT'S MOST SPECIFIC
PUBLIC DISCUSSION TO DATE OF THE BELIZE SITUATION. IN ITS
OUTLINES, IT COMES CLOSE TO THE KIND OF PUBLIC LANGUAGE THE
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LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION EVOLVED IN ITS FINAL SIX MONTHS; AND
IN THE SENSE IT RECOGNIZES THE FORCE OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION
AS A FACTOR, IT CAN BE INTERPRETED AS GOING FURTHER IN ONE
RESPECT. IT WOULD STILL APPEAR, HOWEVER, THAT LUCAS' IDEA OF
A PLAUSIBLE PARTITION ENCOMPASSES SOMETHING WELL ABOVE THE MOHO
RIVER-SOUTHERN KEYS FORMULA WHICH THE LAUGERUD ADMINISTRATION
FOUND TENTATIVELY ACCEPTABLE.

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